

## The Wyoming Army National Guard's Quick Reaction Force starts transition

By Master Sgt. Trudy Woodcock  
Public Affairs Specialist  
Wyoming National Guard

The responsibility for protecting Wyoming against terrorism is moving from the Wyoming Army National Guard's 67th Army Band, in Wheatland, to the 133rd Engineer Company, in Laramie.

The Quick Reaction Force is Wyoming's front line response, in conjunction with the Wyoming Office of Homeland Security, to terrorism and criminal activities that overwhelm local law enforcement. The members of the unit provide security, patrols, check points, and other duties in support of civilian authorities.

The governor has the authority to activate the group for state emergencies to protect key sites like power plants and transportation hubs, establish roadblocks, and provide security at other incident sites. The also may be used to protect selected Department of Defense assets.

The duties of the force are a secondary mission for the assigned Wyoming Army National Guard unit, but remain a high priority. Transitioning the force to Laramie ensures even more Soldiers are trained to respond, if needed.

"The band has done a great job over the past two years as our quick reaction force, but we want to lift some of that pressure off them," Col. Luke Reiner, Wyoming National Guard joint operations officer, said. "The Soldiers undergo extensive training to ensure they are ready and able to meet their secondary mission with the QRF. Spreading the training throughout the Wyoming Army National Guard provides a large base to choose from and units can still concentrate on their primary mission."

The band spent this past weekend training with members of the 133rd to start the transition process. The weekend focused on the control of civil disturbances.

"This is really good training, even though it did take away from our time to practice playing (our instruments)," said Staff Sgt. Jayson Pickens, a base guitar/guitar player for the 67th Army Band. He's been a member of the QRF since it was established. "We were expected to practice on our own time at home so we could complete all our mission tasks."

The weekend training included the Wyoming Air National Guard's component of the Quick Reaction Force. The 153rd Security Forces Squadron personnel provide the first response capabilities for the force, and unlike the Soldiers, do not transition out after a few years.

Chief Master Sgt. Russell Pollard, 153rd Security Forces Squadron chief of security, said mixing the security forces squadron with the Soldiers is one reason the QRF can be successful. “The security forces element’s greatest strength is this is what we do day-to-day by providing security to the Wyoming Air National Guard base. It is a valuable asset to the QRF. Not only are we able to assemble and deploy on a very short notice, we have shown through our validation exercise that we are able to blend with the Army as a joint force.”

The QRF is only one mission the Wyoming National Guard could perform, if needed. There are almost 3,000 Soldiers and Airmen in the Wyoming National Guard given the dual mission to protect state and nation.

Fourteen percent of those troops are deployed, but the remaining 86 percent are trained and ready to answer the call of the governor or president to perform fire fighting, emergency relief, and other non-combat missions.